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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EU](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: EU CONSENSUS FORGED IN TASHKENT ON HEADS OF
MISSION REPORT

REF: (A) TASHKENT 352 (B) TASHKENT 315

Classified By: Amb. Richard Norland for reasons 1.4 (b) and (c)

¶1. (C) The on-again, off-again consensus (reftels) among EU heads of mission (HOM's) in Tashkent on a report to EU ministers regarding human rights and sanctions on Uzbekistan is apparently back on. French Ambassador Hughes Pernet and British Ambassador Iain Kelly (protect) told Ambassador March 27 that agreement was reached after intense diplomacy by the Frenchman. Amb. Pernet found middle ground between the Germans, who did not want to reopen the original report on the principle that a HOM report is just that -- a report from the ground, not influenced by political considerations in capitals -- on the one hand, and the British on the other -- who saw no point in forwarding a report that would be dead-on-arrival in London if not other EU capitals.

¶2. (C) The report will still call on the GAERC to maintain the suspension of sanctions in order to support "the breathing space that everybody seems to need." It still refers to the idea of working with the Uzbeks to shape an "exit strategy" (from sanctions) by the ministerial in November in order to support what HOM's see as "an emerging positive tendency" on human rights, as well as real interest in "rapprochement" with the West. It expresses the belief by HOM's "that balance needs to shift away from pressure toward engagement so long as the Uzbeks continue to make progress."

¶3. (C) Comment: We got a quick look at the text of the new HOM report, but without being able to analyze the differences between it and the earlier version, we can't say for sure how the two differ. The main lines are the same: maintain suspension of sanctions and pursue engagement, as long as the Uzbeks continue to deliver some progress and don't take egregious steps backward. What appears to have restored EU consensus are three factors: (a) the British Ambassador's willingness to argue with London that the principle of HOM reports filed from the field needed to be maintained; (b) the realization by all concerned that a unanimous report would carry far more weight; and (c) the fact that the report is in no way binding. Amb. Kelly made no bones that he still thinks it highly unlikely that London will buy on to keeping the suspension of sanctions in place.

NORLAND